

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The claims are 2-6. Claim 1 has been canceled in favor of new claim 6 to better define the invention. Accordingly, claims 2-5, which previously depended on claim 1 have been amended to depend on new claim 6. In addition, these claims have been amended to delete reference numerals or to improve their form. The Abstract to the Disclosure has also been amended. Reconsideration is expressly requested.

The drawings were objected to as failing to comply with 37 C.F.R. 1.84(p)(4) because reference character "23" was used to designate both "the wire core" and "the hose pack" in claim 1 and the Abstract. In response, Applicants have canceled claim 1 in favor of new claim 6 and have amended the Abstract to delete reference numerals. As is apparent from the disclosure, reference number 23 should designate "the hose pack" only as shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, and "the wire core" is referred to in the disclosure with reference number 43. It is respectfully submitted that the foregoing amendments overcome the Examiner's objection to the drawings under 37 C.F.R. 1.84(p)(4), and Applicants respectfully request that the rejection on that basis be withdrawn.

Claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for the reasons set forth on page 3 of the Office Action. In response, Applicants have canceled claim 1 in favor of new claim 6 and have amended claims 2-5, *inter alia*, to improve their form. It is respectfully submitted that all currently pending claims fully comply with 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, and Applicants respectfully request that the rejection on that basis be withdrawn as well.

Claims 1 and 3-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by *Bosna U.S. Patent No. 4,539,465*. The remaining claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Bosna* in view of *Tonita U.S. Patent No. 4,160,151*. Essentially the Examiner's position was that *Bosna* discloses the welding wire storage device recited in the claims, except for the coupling mechanisms being designed as a quick-lock, which is said to be shown by *Tonita*.

This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As set forth in new claim 6, Applicants' invention provides a welding wire storage device for a welding system including a

housing, a wire core, a measuring device for detecting deflection of the wire core, a guide element, a wire guide hose for the wire core, and first and second coupling mechanisms arranged on the housing for connection with the wire guide hose. The housing has a free space, a first end region and a second end region opposite the first end region. The wire core surrounds a welding wire arcuately arranged to lie freely in the free space of the housing and has a first end fixed in the first end region of the housing. The guide element is on the second end region of the housing and displaceably mounts the wire core.

In this way, Applicants' invention provides a welding wire storage device having a very simple and compact structure.

The primary reference to *Bosna* fails to disclose or suggest a welding wire storage device for a welding system having the structure recited in new claim 6. *Bosna* simply discloses a wire feed system for a robot welder having no welding wire storage device as recited in new claim 6. The wire storage and feed system 20 of *Bosna* includes a base plate 22 mounted on and extending along the robot arm 14. A wire storage spool or reel 28 is supported upon the mounting plate 24 which is slidably movable along the base plate 22. The electrode wire 30 for the

welding gun 16 is stored on the spool or reel 28 and is fed to the gun via wire straightener means 32 and wire feed means 34. See column 2, lines 45-66 and FIGS. 1 to 3 of *Bosna*. It is respectfully submitted that there is no wire buffer between the wire storage spool or reel and the welding gun of *Bosna*, which enables the temporary storage of a small amount of welding wire in the case of different wire feeding speeds or at a change in the feeding direction of the welding wire as is the case with Applicants' welding wire storage device as recited in new claim 6. With *Bosna's* device, it is not possible to temporarily store the welding wire within a wire buffer.

The defects and deficiencies of the primary reference to *Bosna* are nowhere remedied by the secondary reference to *Tonita*, which has been cited with respect to claim 2. *Bosna* simply discloses a welding gun 14 connected through a length of flexible welding wire receiving conduit 16 to the output side of a welding wire feed device 18, which is adapted to be moved by the operator to facilitate his or her movement around the work product being welded. There is no disclosure or suggestion of a welding wire storage device having the structure recited in new claim 6 or the benefits that are achieved by that structure.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that new claim 6, together with claims 2-5, which depend thereon, are patentable over the cited reference. Applicants would also like to advise the Examiner that corresponding patents have been granted in Austria, China and recently in Europe. Attached for the Examiner's consideration is a copy of European Patent EP 1 708 842 B1, which was granted November 12, 2008.

In summary, claim 1 has been canceled, claims 2-5 have been amended, and new claim 6 has been added. The Abstract of the Disclosure has also been amended. In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully requested that the claims be allowed and that this case be passed to issue.

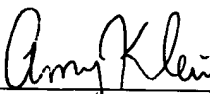
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Enclosures: Abstract of the Disclosure
Copy of EP 1 708 842 B1

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner of Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on June 18, 2009.


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